

FROM THE EDITOR

With the 2013 issue of *African Music* (Volume 9, Number 3) we are pleased to, for the first time, offer readers video clips of the Venda *tshikona* reedpipe dance and a Gnawa *lila* ritual in addition to the audio tracks on the media disc that accompanies the journal. The diverse collection of articles cover a broad geographic range including the DRC, Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Cameroon, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Senegal, Mali, Cuba, Namibia and Morocco. Thanks are extended to the authors of articles and book reviews, to the peer reviewers for their constructive comments and to Elijah Madiba, Mandy Carver, Shiloh Marsh, and Jane Burnett for their assistance with preparation of this issue.

We are once again privileged to publish primary research by South Africa's senior ethnomusicologists, Professors Emeritus Andrew Tracey and Dave Dargie. Andrew Tracey presents transcriptions he prepared from video recordings of the Venda *tshikona* reedpipe dance made by PhD candidate, Laina Gumboreshumba in the course of her dissertation research in 2011. In work that goes beyond that of John Blacking to add significantly to knowledge of *tshikona*, Tracey describes his transcription technique and offers melodic, rhythmic and dance step transcriptions with analysis that reveals the form and rhythmic organisation of the music played on reedpipes and drums and its relationship to other reedpipe traditions of southern Africa. Dargie's article on Kavango music, produced from his field recordings from 1979-1988, fills a void in scholarship of African music, as no prior publications that document Kavango music exist. His transcriptions reveal basic characteristics of Kavango music which he then compares to indigenous music of the Ovambo, Damara, Zulu and Xhosa to suggest possible historical connections.

Fascinating historical work on African musical instruments is found in the articles by Julien Volper on *mbila* one note xylophones and Andrew Tracey on *mbira*. As a museum curator doing a study of instruments under his watch, Volper presents images and the circumstances surrounding collection of the seven *mbila* one-note xylophones held by the Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, Tervuren, Belgium. His article goes far in demonstrating the value of the empirical work of early collectors to knowledge of African instruments, in this case that of *mbila*, their geographic spread and the contexts in which they were played. Andrew Tracey's article on an *mbira* he predicted tells of how his discovery of a particular *mbira* at the Ditsong cultural history museum in Pretoria gave him evidence to add to his 'family of the *mbira*' presented in *African Music* Volume 5, Number 2 (1972). In that article he predicted this very *mbira* must exist; imagine his excitement when he found it! Now, four decades later, we have the pleasure of publishing this additional evidence in support of his original hypothesis.

Also gracing this issue are three articles that deal with issues of music, cultural identity and nationalism in postcolonial Africa. Anja Brunner's article on the symbiotic, mutually beneficial relationship of vocalist Anne-Marie Nzié's life-long career and her song, "Liberté" with the postcolonial Cameroonian state documents a situation in which the artist and her song in support of the ruling government, over

time and without any intention on her part, evolved into a political message against the ruling power. Zimbabwean hit songs are used by Mickey Musiyiwa as a mirror that tells the history of societal sentiments from the advent of independence in 1980 through 2009. His article gives an in-depth tour-de-force account of changing attitudes of the Zimbabwean populous and how they are reflected in the songs that have enjoyed hit status from the initial effervescence of the 1980s through to the 90s when people began to see promises were not being delivered to the on-going crises of the past two decades. His overview of hit songs provides insight into postcolonial realities in Zimbabwe over three decades and speaks to the power of popular music to move people on both individual and collective levels.

Popular music of the Edo in Nigeria is examined by Austin Emielu for how it retains Edo ethnic identity despite changes brought through adaptation of outside influences. His article examines ethnicization and regionalization of Nigerian popular music to show how the Edo have retained their unique ethnic aesthetic in their music as a means to maintain their 'otherness' in relation to their more dominant neighbours, the Yoruba and Ibo. Again, the material presented reveals much about postcolonial realities in Nigeria. The fascinating story of musical collaboration between Senegal and Mali and Cuba as revealed through two groups, Orchestra Baobab from Senegal that blends Senegalese and Cuban influences and AfroCubism, made up of seven Cuban and six Malian musicians, is told by SEM African Music Section student paper prize winner Aleysia Whitmore. Relying heavily on interview data, her article addresses various dimensions of how collaboration of the musicians in these groups serves to promote their status as modern professional artists on the world stage while their music retains emphasis on their unique African and Afro-diasporic sounds.

Finally, a micro-analysis of Gnawa trance music by Masie Sum pin points the relationship between music performed and the onset of trance in a *lila* ritual event. Sum gives readers a method for analysis of the relationship between music and trance that combines close observation and correlation through transcriptions of video recordings of the relationship between music, gesture, and trance behaviour. Sum's research adds to the growing body of publications on Gnawa ritual music and its relationship to invocation of trance and attempts to outline an analytical method with efficacy for other researchers of music and trance.

The collection of articles in this issue is remarkable for how all of the diverse research contributes historical data about each particular instrument and/or music studied. We have here analysis based on transcriptions that has produced knowledge of the music itself never before published in the contributions of our stalwart scholars, Dave Dargie and Andrew Tracey. At the same time, the carefully contextualized ethnographic studies of Brunner, Musiyiwa, Emielu, Whitmore and Sum provide compelling information addressing the crux of interdisciplinary studies dealing with African postcolonial realities and the role of music in them. The overall content of this issue reflects how ethnomusicology as a discipline is at the cutting edge of contemporary cultural studies while, if the authors in this issue

are any indication, it continues to adhere to the disciplinary model for research practice: integration of musicological analysis with historical contextualization and situated ethnographic research.

Researchers with collections of field recordings are urged to consider depositing them at ILAM where they will be processed and preserved according to international audiovisual archiving standards. Research projects utilising ILAM's holdings and research affiliations are always welcomed at ILAM. Finally, submissions from primary research on African music and music with its roots in Africa are being accepted for Volume 9, number 4 (2014). Instructions for authors are found on the inside front cover and the ILAM website; if you have questions please feel free to contact me via email at: d.thram@ru.ac.za.

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